

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of etching an uniform silicon layer, comprising:  
providing a patterned silicon layer with etching residues on sidewalls thereof;  
treating said patterned silicon layer with etching residues on sidewalls thereof  
using a gas comprising oxygen and etching agent to thereby form ~~forming~~ an etching  
buffer layer conformally on the etching residues and the top surface of the patterned  
silicon layer; and  
etching the etching buffer layer, the etching residues, and the patterned silicon  
layer until the thickness of the patterned silicon layer is reduced.
2. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the etching buffer layer  
comprises silicon oxide (SiO<sub>2</sub>).
3. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the etching buffer layer is  
formed by oxidation.
4. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising Cl<sub>2</sub>, SF<sub>6</sub>, or HBr used  
during etching.
5. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thickness of the etching  
buffer layer is about 5~20nm.
6. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the thickness of the patterned  
silicon layer is about 120~250nm.
7. (Currently Amended) A method of etching an uniform silicon layer, comprising:  
providing a silicon layer;

forming a mask with patterns on the silicon layer;  
performing a first etching to pattern the silicon layer using the mask as a shield, to form a patterned silicon layer with patterns and etching residues on sidewalls thereof;  
removing the mask;  
treating said patterned silicon layer with patterns and etching residues on sidewalls thereof using a gas comprising oxygen and etching agent to thereby form  
~~forming~~ an etching buffer layer conformally on the etching residues and the top surface of the patterned silicon layer; and  
performing a second etching to remove the etching buffer layer and the etching residues, to reduce the thickness of the patterned silicon layer.

8. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the mask is a photoresist layer.

9. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the etching buffer layer comprises silicon oxide ( $\text{SiO}_2$ ).

10. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the etching buffer layer is formed by oxidation.

11. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 7, further comprising  $\text{Cl}_2$ ,  $\text{SF}_6$ , or HBr used during the second etching.

12. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 7 ~~1~~, wherein the thickness of the etching buffer layer is about 5~20nm.

13. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the thickness of the patterned silicon layer is about 120~250nm.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of etching a silicon layer to avoid non-uniformity, comprising:

providing a silicon layer;  
forming a mask with patterns on the silicon layer;  
performing a first etching to pattern the silicon layer using the mask as a shield,  
to form a patterned silicon layer with patterns and etching residues on sidewalls  
thereof;  
removing the mask;  
introducing a gas containing oxygen treatment, using a gas comprising oxygen  
and etching agent, to conformally form an etching buffer layer on the etching residues  
and the top surface of the patterned silicon layer; and  
performing a second etching to remove the etching buffer layer and the etching  
residues formed on sidewalls thereof, to reduce the thickness of the patterned silicon  
layer.

15. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the mask is a photoresist  
layer.

16. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 14, further comprising  $\text{Cl}_2$ ,  
 $\text{SF}_6$ , or  $\text{HBr}$  used during the second etching.

17. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the thickness of the etching  
buffer layer is about 5~20nm.

18. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the thickness of the patterned  
silicon layer is about 120~250nm.

19. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the gas comprises  
90%~100% oxygen and not more than 10~0% etching agent used in second etching.

20. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the gas containing oxygen  
treatment is performed at about 10~90°C.